



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL REPORT

Report Title	CARBON NEUTRAL NORTHAMPTON STRATEGY
---------------------	--

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Committee Meeting Date:	22 nd February 2021
Policy Document:	Carbon Neutral Northampton Strategy
Directorate:	Planning and Sustainability

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to note the Carbon Neutral Northampton Strategy (CNNS) direction of travel.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council notes the Carbon Neutral Northampton Strategy direction of travel.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 At its meeting on 3rd June 2019, Northampton Borough Council agreed two Motions to declare a Climate Emergency

First motion;

'This council recognises the strength of public opinion recently expressed in London and Northampton to address the issue of climate change and the need to address carbon reduction to protect the health and wellbeing of future

generations. The council also notes that the UK parliament has declared a Climate Emergency.

The Council therefore declares “a Climate Emergency” in Northampton and commits to a target of making Northampton carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council Requests a report to be submitted to the council in 12 months’ time and updated in January 2021 setting out the action that has been taken in respect to this motion and detailing how progressing this objective has been communicated to and integrated within the start up plans of the West Northamptonshire Unitary Council.’

Second motion;

‘All parties within this council acknowledge the urgency of dealing with climate change. We need cross party agreement to develop strategies for a greener, more sustainable society in Northampton. A green revolution is required.

Working with partners we will seek to implement the following actions, which we strongly believe will benefit Northampton in leading an eco-friendly Britain:

- A ban on single-use plastics within school environments. Schools across Northampton produce a huge amount of plastic waste each week
- Northampton schools would benefit from educating their students on eco issues through school schemes, where programs could be set up in order to teach students how to stay green in lessons, such as Personal, Social, Health and Economic education or by holding educational assemblies with influential speakers.
- To help further reduce the damaging effects of plastic littering, the council should support and work closely with schemes operated by companies like TerraCycle who turn many unrecyclable plastics (such as crisp packets and wrappers) into outdoor furniture.
- To explore with Local businesses and partners options for an eco-rewards scheme that would allow individuals and groups to gain something back from recycling.
- Northampton Borough Council to commit to reducing carbon emissions, both as an organisation and as the local planning authority and resolve to go further than the UK100 Agreement. To act in line with the scientific consensus that we must reduce emissions to net-zero carbon by 2030, thus use the planning process to encourage developers to consider low carbon developments.

Joining many councils who have already done the same, NBC declares “a Climate Emergency” in Northampton and commits to a target, in line with the above actions, of making Northampton carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council requests a production of a baseline report to be submitted to the council in the beginning of 2020 setting out the action that has been taken in respect to this motion. This Council also resolves to work with other local

authorities ahead of Unitary to use the baseline report as the basis on which to develop an action plan which could be adopted by the new Council.

3.1.2 Since then, officers and members have been working with a variety of partners, through the Northampton Climate Change Forum, the Climate Change Champions (an officer group) and the Northampton Forward Environment Task and Finish Group, to establish the themes the CNNS needs to address. There has also been close co-operation with officers from Daventry District Council, South Northamptonshire Council and Northamptonshire County Council. The vision and targets have also been presented to Councillors from those organisations at the West Northamptonshire Environment Task and Finish group.

3.1.3 Ordinarily, the next step for an authority would be to adopt a strategy and action plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. However, given the reorganisation of local government, NBC has not been in a position to make commitments of this nature beyond the Vesting Day of the new authority. Nevertheless, as the existing Council for Northampton, the elected Members have shown their continued commitment and interest in climate change by adopting a Climate Change Strategy direction of travel that sets out an approach and vision that they would have endorsed as an authority, should they be in existence beyond Vesting Day. The CNNS has therefore been drafted with the scope of the wider unitary Council in mind, and is presented to Northampton Borough Council as a Strategy for the new Council to consider when it develops its own approach to climate change and sustainability.

3.1.4 The CNNS has been influenced by the latest emissions data for the Borough of Northampton, which has focused attention on the current balance of emissions between industry and commercial, domestic and transport sectors, as shown below.

3.1.5 NBC Emissions

	TOTAL			
Year (Mt CO2 e)	2005	2017	2018	%
Industrial & Commercial	585	287	266	
Domestic total	489	308	300	
Transport total	348	316	310	
Grand Total	1,422	909	876	
Per Capita emissions	7.2	4.00	3.9	45.8%
UK per Capita emissions	8.7	5.3	5.2	40.22%

3.1.6 It should be noted that the Climate Emergency declarations, and data above, relate to the emissions in the geographical area of the borough of Northampton, not just the emissions from the activity of the Borough Council.

3.1.7 On 16th December 2020, Cabinet agreed to support the Carbon Neutral Northampton Strategy direction of travel and that it be taken to full Council for

noting, and recommended that West Northamptonshire Council considers the CNNS when it develops its own sustainability strategy

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 The *vision* of the CNNS is that by 2030, Northampton has become carbon neutral, zero waste and climate resilient town, playing its part in limiting the impacts of climate change, both locally and globally, where residents, businesses and partners all benefit from the improved environment.

3.2.2 The vision also sets out objectives around the following;

- A carbon neutral economy, including buildings, transport, waste and energy
- Sustainable economy and jobs including encouraging low carbon investment and innovative local growth
- Healthy communities including providing low carbon housing, local food production, improved air quality, and enhanced green infrastructure and trees
- A resilient town, including adapting to climate change already happening and renewable local energy generation
- Climate positive decision making and education

3.2.3 It is recognised that, as the target is for the geographical borough to be carbon neutral, this will require extensive co-operation with a wide range of partners from the business and industry, education, health, transport and public sectors, as well as the community. It is also recognised that the Borough Council, through its own activity and its role in managing over 11 000 homes through Northampton Partnership Homes, has a significant part to play in this.

3.2.4 The vision also reflects the Government's aspirations for the wider Oxford-Cambridge Arc, encouraging green development and innovative responses to climate change and decline in the natural environment.

3.2.5 In order to understand how to achieve this, the *scope* of the CNNS includes the following **organisational** emissions;

Scope 1	Owned transport Fuel use
	Process emissions
Scope 2	Purchased electricity
Scope 3	Purchased goods Operational waste Business travel Capital goods purchased Employee commute

The following **community** emissions will be included within the baseline;

Scope 1	Land use Stationary fuel consumptions In-boundary transportation
---------	--

Scope 2 In boundary waste and wastewater
 Grid supplied electricity

(Scope 1, 2 and 3 are defined in the Greenhouse Gas Protocol as follows;
Scope 1 – direct emissions which can be controlled by the organisation
Scope 2 – indirect emissions used by the organisation, for example during energy production
Scope 3 – all other indirect emissions.)

3.2.6 The final section of the CNNS sets out a number of *actions and targets*. As mentioned above, as the plan is to be recommended for consideration by West Northamptonshire Council, a number of the actions and targets run past 31st March 2021. However, these are purely intended to set a potential direction of travel and could be adopted and developed by the successor authority which is likely to develop its own overarching approach to climate change and sustainability. **The actions and targets are therefore illustrative only, and do not commit either authority to any action or expenditure.** The actions and targets are grouped by theme as follows;

3.2.7 **Influence**, with targets to;

- work with partners, establish a Forum and run a Carbon Neutral Conference
- all reports to consider carbon emissions in full
- set up a website and communications programme
- audit all Council buildings, fleet and procurement policies
- develop a low carbon Transport plan, improve cycling and walking networks, work with public transport operators and employers, develop the electric vehicle charging point network

3.2.8 **Buildings**, including;

- Policies to require all new buildings to be carbon neutral by 2026
- Undertake heat mapping exercises
- Act on fuel poverty
- Promote low cost technologies to reduce energy use
- require new developments to calculate their carbon impact by the use of Embodied Carbon in Construction calculations, and whole-life costing in design and procurement processes as part of planning applications.

3.2.9 **Waste**, including;

- Promote behavioural change
- By April 2022, the Council estate will be single use plastics free
- By April 2022, investigate the potential for collecting and using food waste for the generation of energy by anaerobic digestion

3.2.10 **Energy**, including;

- Commit to green gas and electricity by 2022

- Investigate on site energy generation
- Investigate using hydrogen gas
- Investigate district heat networks
- Investigate local energy storage
- Promote investment in low carbon industries
- Develop low carbon skills in education and training

3.2.11 **Procurement**, including;

- Reviewing procurement policies by 2022

3.2.12 **Green and blue infrastructure**, including

- Review and promote existing facilities
- Promote sustainable tree planting
- Manage and reduce flooding, both as a result of new growth and through adaptations to respond to changes in weather patterns already happening

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1** Support for an up-to-date strategy will assist the development of policies at the local level to address local issues

Resources and Risk

- 4.2** The development of a Strategy will require the allocation of resources to support staff and to commission the audits identified. West Northamptonshire Council will need to consider this as it develops its Strategy, along with the development of a new set of Carbon Neutral measures to fully assess the impacts of the actions proposed, including assessing the impact on householders and all stakeholders.

4.3 Legal

No specific legal implications arising. There will be implications for effective delivery of the individual actions and commitments within the Strategy as they come forward, which Legal will advise and assist with as required.

4.4 Equality and Health

- 4.4.1** Given its aspirational nature, the Strategy has not been assessed. However, through the measures improving air quality, wellbeing, and reducing emissions, there would be significant improvements in these regards.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 The Climate Change Forum have been regularly briefed and had the opportunity to comment on the direction of travel within the Strategy. The informal meeting of the West Northamptonshire Environment Task and Finish Group have also been briefed on the content of the strategy.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The strategy will help to guide all development across Northampton, achieving economic, environmental and social benefits. In terms of the strategic priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, the CNNS will help to deliver a stronger economy by helping Northampton grow and prosper, creating resilient communities by encouraging and supporting sustainable housing, employment and infrastructure delivery whilst protecting the health and wellbeing of the people of Northampton and its environment.

4.7 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)

4.7.1 On 3rd June 2019, the Council declared a climate change emergency, and the objective to make Northampton carbon neutral by 2030. The direction of travel in the CNNS seeks to recommend targets and actions to address climate change and will help to improve the sustainability of new development.

4.8 Other Implications

4.7.1 None.

5. Background Papers

Appendix A – CNNS 2030

Peter Baguley
Assistant Chief Executive (interim) and Director of Sustainability and Planning
01604 838921